

WHAT THE FOUNDERS SAID (PART II)

Dave Miller, Ph.D.

[**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Part I of this two-part series appeared in the August issue. Part II follows below, and continues, without introductory comments, where the first article ended.]

ABOUT THE UNIVERSAL SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY

The Continental Congress was composed of scores of men who bear the appellation “Founders” of America. During the past half century, we have been assured that they advocated “inclusion,” “diversity,” and the notion that all religions and ideologies ought to be “celebrated” as equally authentic. We have been told that they certainly did not advocate the public promotion of Christianity. Is this viewpoint correct? Were the Founders “deists” who advocated religious neutrality? (see Miller, 2005; Miller, 2008). What, specifically, did they say on the matter? The following excerpts are from their proclamations, taken directly from the *Journals of the Continental Congress* at the Library of Congress. The first was issued on November 1, 1777:

FORASMUCH as it is the indispensable Duty of all Men to adore the superintending Providence of Almighty God; to acknowledge with Gratitude their Obligation to him

for Benefits received, and to implore such further Blessings as they stand in Need of.... It is therefore recommended to the legislative or executive Powers of these UNITED STATES to set apart THURSDAY, the eighteenth Day of December next, for SOLEMN THANKSGIVING and PRAISE...that it may please him...**to prosper the Means of Religion, for the promotion and enlargement of that Kingdom, which consisteth “in Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost”** (*Journals of...*, 9:854-851, emp. added).

The “kingdom” to which they referred is the kingdom of Christ, as indicated by their allusion to Romans 14:17. Another proclamation came on March 20, 1779:

RESOLVED, THAT it be recommended to the several States to appoint the First Thursday in May next to be a Day of Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer to Almighty God...that he will diffuse useful knowledge, **extend the influence of true religion**, and give us that peace of mind, which the world cannot give (*Journals of...*, 13:343-344, emp. added).

“True religion” is a reference to Christianity—to the exclusion of all other religions. They called upon the entire nation to petition God to extend the influence of Christianity! The “peace of mind which the world cannot give”

is a direct allusion to the words of Jesus (John 14:27) and Paul (Philippians 4:7).

On October 20, 1779, Congress issued still another supplication proclamation:

Whereas it becomes us humbly to approach the throne of Almighty God, with gratitude and praise for the wonders which his goodness has wrought...**above all, that he hath diffused the glorious light of the gospel, whereby, through the merits of our gracious Redeemer,**

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we may become the heirs of his eternal glory: therefore, Resolved, That it be recommended to the several states, to appoint Thursday, the 9th of December next, to be a day of public and solemn thanksgiving to Almighty God for his mercies, and of prayer for the continuance of his favor and protection to these United States (*Journals of...*, 15:1191-1193, emp. added).

"The glorious light of the gospel" is an allusion to 2 Corinthians 4:4, and "heirs of his eternal glory" is a reference to 2 Timothy 2:10. Diffusing the Gospel of Christ was of paramount importance to the Founders. They thanked God that the Gospel had been thoroughly diffused throughout America.

One year later, in yet another proclamation to the nation, the Founders again reiterated their desire that Christianity be promoted:

It is therefore recommended to the several states to set apart Thursday, the seventh day of December next, to be observed as a day of public thanksgiving and prayer...that it may please him to...**build up his churches in their most holy faith and to cause the knowledge of Christianity to spread over all the earth** (*Journals of...*, 18:950-951, emp. added).

"Most holy faith" is an allusion to Christianity, taken from Jude 20.

In March of 1781, they again advocated the spread of the Christian religion throughout the world:

The United States in Congress assembled, therefore do earnestly recommend, that Thursday the third day of May next, may be observed as a day of humiliation, fasting and prayer...that it may please him to bless all schools and seminaries of learning, and to grant that truth, justice and benevolence, and **pure and undefiled religion, may universally prevail** (*Journals of...*, 19:284-286, emp. added).

"Pure and undefiled religion" is yet another allusion to Christianity, drawn from James 1:27. The Founders insisted that it must be spread "universally." Another comparable declaration came on March 19, 1782:

The United States in Congress assembled...think it their indispensable duty to call upon the several states, to set apart the last Thursday in April next, as a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer...that He would incline the hearts of all men to peace, and fill them with universal charity and benevolence, and **that the religion of our Divine Redeemer, with all its benign influences, may cover the earth as the waters cover the**

seas (*Journals of...*, 22:137-138, emp. added).

The "Divine Redeemer" is Jesus Christ. Calling for Christ's religion to "cover the earth as the waters cover the seas" is taken from Isaiah 11:9 and Habakkuk 2:14. The Founders **never** asked that Hinduism cover the Earth, nor Islam, Buddhism, or Atheism. Rather, they begged God to cover the Earth with the religion of Christ as thoroughly and completely as the waters cover the oceans of the world.

Later that year, on October 11, the Congress issued another proclamation to the nation:

[T]herefore, the United States in Congress assembled...do hereby recommend it to the inhabitants of these states in general, to observe, and request the several states to interpose their authority in appointing and commanding the observation of Thursday, the twenty-eighth day of November next, as a day of solemn thanksgiving to God for all his mercies: and they do further recommend to all ranks, to testify their gratitude to God for his goodness, by a cheerful obedience to his laws, and by promoting, each in his station, and by his influence, **the practice of true and undefiled religion** (*Journals of...*, 23:647, emp. added).

Finally, with the Revolutionary War ended, on October 18, 1783 the Continental Congress issued a final supplication proclamation to the country:

[T]he United States in Congress assembled do recommend it to the several States, to set apart the second Thursday in December next, as a day of public thanksgiving, that all the people may then assemble to celebrate with grateful hearts and united voices, the praises of their Supreme and all bountiful Benefactor, for his numberless favors and mercies...and **above all, that he hath been pleased to continue to us the light of the blessed gospel...that he may be pleased...to cause pure religion and virtue to flourish**, to give peace to all

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nations, and to **fill the world with his glory** (*Journals of...*, 25:699-701, emp. added).

As if they wanted to make absolutely certain that there would be no question in the eyes of the world and in us their posterity, the Founders stated once again their insistence that among the multitude of blessings, favors, and mercies bestowed upon them by God, **above them all**, was their gratitude that God had perpetuated Christianity—"the light of the blessed gospel"—among them. They earnestly desired that God's glory would fill the world (an allusion to Psalm 72:19). Oh, that our political leaders and all Americans would share that desire!

Can there be any question? No. The Continental Congress, quintessential Founders of the Republic, issued numerous organic utterances that undeniably demonstrate their inherent, intimate attachment to God, Jesus Christ, and Christianity. Did the Founders advocate the universal spread of Christianity? Absolutely. They **repeatedly** called upon the entire nation to request that God might see fit to spread Christianity throughout the world. They were familiar with—and firmly believed—the words of Habakkuk 2:14: "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

THE GREAT FOUNDATION OF PUBLIC PROSPERITY

Much is being said these days about the state of the economy. From the near collapse of the mortgage industry to the bankruptcy of a major American auto manufacturer, widespread discussion has occupied the attention of the federal government, the media, economists, and the average American. And what are the solutions being offered to rectify America's economic woes and secure public pros-

perity? You name it. Everything from government bail outs and borrowing from China to increasing taxes on citizens. Since we long ago banned God, Christianity, and the Bible from the public square (à la ACLU "separation of church and state"), few seem willing even to contemplate the fact that **spirituality and religion** have anything to do with the economic condition of the nation. The fact is, they have everything to do with it.

It should, therefore, be somewhat of a shock to learn what the architects of American civilization had to say about the economy, specifically, what constitutes **the foundation** of public prosperity and national happiness. With the Revolutionary War reaching its conclusion, the Continental Congress issued a proclamation to the entire nation on October 11, 1782, calling for a day of thanksgiving directed to the God of the Bible:

It being the indispensable duty of all nations, not only to offer up their supplications to Almighty God, the giver of all good, for his gracious assistance in a time of public distress, but also in a solemn and public manner to give him praise for his goodness in general, and especially for great and signal interpositions of his Providence in their behalf; therefore, the United States in Congress assembled, taking into their consideration the many instances of divine goodness to these states, in the course of the important conflict in which they have been so long engaged; the present happy and promising state of public affairs; and the events of the war in the course of the year now drawing to a close, particularly the harmony of the public councils, which is so necessary to the success of the public cause,...do hereby recommend it to the inhabitants of these states in general, to observe, and request the several states to interpose their authority in appointing and commanding the observation of Thursday, in the 28 day of November next, as a day of solemn thanksgiving to God for all his mercies: and they do further

recommend to all ranks, to testify their gratitude to God for his goodness, by a cheerful obedience to his laws, and by promoting, each in his station, and by his influence, **the practice of true and undefiled religion, which is the great foundation of public prosperity and national happiness.**

Done in Congress at Philadelphia, the eleventh day of October, in the year of our LORD one thousand seven hundred and eighty-two, and of our Sovereignty and Independence, the Seventh.

John Hanson, President.

Charles Thomson, Secretary (*Journals of...*, 1904-1937, 23:647, emp. added).

Can you believe it? The "great foundation of public prosperity" is "the practice of true and undefiled religion"? What religion is that? "Pure and undefiled religion," alluded to in the New Testament passage James 1:27, is nothing other than **the religion of Christ**. Who today believes, from the President on down to the average American, that promoting God's laws throughout America via the Christian religion—in government, schools, and public life—is the key to achieving prosperous, happy citizens? Nevertheless, it is true. Even as prominent Founder Noah Webster, in eerily prophetic fashion, declared:

If a republican government fails to secure public prosperity and happiness, **it must be because the citizens neglect the Divine commands and elect bad men to make and administer the laws** (1832, pp. 337, emp. added).

God's warnings to the nation of Israel are strikingly parallel to America:

When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you. Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, lest—when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; and...your silver and your gold are multiplied,

and all that you have is multiplied; when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God...then you say in your heart, "My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth." Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the LORD your God, and follow other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish. As the nations which the LORD destroys before you, so you shall perish, because you would not be obedient to the voice of the LORD your God (Deuteronomy 8:10-20).

What better description could be found of America's current predicament? Compare another one that likewise sounds as if it were written to predict America's shift from the greatest, most blessed and independent nation on Earth to a nation in decline, dependant on other nations, and heading toward its ultimate demise:

Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God: Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country. Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.

The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways. The LORD will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand.... Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you. And the LORD will grant you plenty of goods.... The LORD will open to you

His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them. So you shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them. **But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you** (Deuteronomy 28:1-15, emp. added).

In these perilous times, the psalmist's plea to God for national security is one that ought to be on the hearts and lips of every American:

God be merciful to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us. That Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations.

Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You.

Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy! For You shall judge the people righteously, and govern the nations on earth. Let the peoples praise You, O God;

Let all the peoples praise You. Then the earth shall yield her increase;

God, our own God, shall bless us.

God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him (Psalm 67:1-7).

The Bible repeatedly articulates the same point: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD" (Psalm 33:12).

ABOUT THE SINS OF AMERICANS

The religious, spiritual condition of Americans is at an all-time low. Commitment to the Christian religion and the precepts of Jesus Christ has waned significantly in the past half century. Religion has been relegated to strictly private, personal tastes. And

Christianity is perceived by many to be simply one religion among many, receiving no position of priority in the country. Hence, whatever any person believes with regard to moral behavior is considered acceptable and essentially irrelevant to the overall condition of the nation.

In vivid contrast, the Founders of the country believed and voiced vigorously their belief that the religious, spiritual, and moral condition of the citizenry of America was integral and critical to the establishment and ongoing success of the Republic. More specifically, they believed in the God of the Bible and the religion of Christ, and **they were convinced that the nation would be blessed by God only insofar as the citizens obeyed the teaching of the Bible, and received forgiveness for their sins.** Hard to believe? Consider a few of the official pronouncements of the Continental Congress, again, a body composed of scores of men who served during the Revolutionary War and the birth of the nation, and who bear the appellation "Founders" of America.

On March 16, 1776, four months before declaring independence, Congress issued a fasting and prayer proclamation to the entire nation that particularly spotlights their attitude regarding sin:

In times of impending calamity and distress; when the liberties of America are imminently endangered by the secret machinations and open assaults of an insidious and vindictive administration, it becomes the indispensable duty of these hitherto free and happy colonies, with true penitence of heart, and the most reverent devotion, publicly to acknowledge the overruling providence of God; **to confess and deplore our offences against him;** and to supplicate his interposition for averting the threatened danger, and prospering our strenuous efforts

Dawkins Can't See the Forest for the Trees

Kyle Butt, M.A.

Richard Dawkins recently penned *The Greatest Show on Earth* that he believes sets forth overwhelming evidence to establish the “fact” of evolution. He wrote the book because he admitted that in his previous works, he “realized that the evidence for evolution itself was nowhere explicitly set out, and that this was a serious gap” that he “needed to close” (2009, p. vii). This self-acknowledged gap remains open, however, because the text of his newest book fails completely to state explicitly anything resembling “the evidence for evolution.”

Confirmation of the book's failure to provide a rational case for evolution can be clearly seen in Dawkins' discussion about trees (pp. 377-380). In his assessment of trees, Dawkins suggests that tall tree trunks are simply a waste of energy that could be disposed of “if only all the trees in the forest could come to some agreement” not to grow past a certain height. He states:

And this brings us face to face with the difference between a designed economy and an evolutionary economy. In a designed economy there would be no trees, or certainly no very tall trees: no forests, no canopy. Trees are a waste. Trees are extravagant. Tree trunks are standing monuments to futile competition—futile if we think in terms of planned economy. But the natural economy is not planned. Individual plants compete with other plants, of the same and other species, and the result is that they grow taller and taller, far taller than any planner would recommend (p. 379).

According to Dawkins, tall tree trunks are the squandered natural resources of plants that must constantly compete with other plants to capture the precious rays of sunshine that drive their nutrition production. In fact, he states that massive tree trunks “have no purpose apart from competing with other trees” (p. 379). He concludes that “the forest would look very different if its economy had been designed for the benefit of the forest *as a whole*” (p. 380, italics in orig.). He believes that only the idea of competition between individual trees can account for the look of a forest with massive-trunked trees filling it. In summarizing his “evidence” about trees, he states: “Everything about trees is compatible with the view that they were not designed—**unless, of course, they were designed to supply us with timber**, or to delight our eyes and flatter our cameras in the new England Fall” (p. 380, emp. added).

In assessing Dawkins' conclusion about trees, it must be stressed that he has not provided any evidence by which one could conclude that “everything about trees is compatible with the view that they were not designed.” He has not shown how genetic information could spontaneously assemble itself through any known natural process that would give rise to a tree. He has not shown how genetic mutations could change one tree into another kind of tree, say an apple tree into an oak. Nor has he shown how trees could possibly share any type of ancestral relationship with animals, which he would have to do in order to defend evolution and refute creation. All Dawkins has shown is that trees have the genetic ability to grow trunks that eventually reach a certain limit of height and breadth that they cannot exceed.

Furthermore, Dawkins admits defeat, at least in his discussion of trees, when he acknowledges that a Creator could have in mind other things besides forest economy. Dawkins acknowledges that tree trunks would make perfect sense **if** they were designed to provide humans with timber or beauty. Yet that is precisely why the Bible explains God created the world—to be inhabited by man: “For thus says the Lord, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it **to be inhabited**” (Psalm 45:18). Not only that, but also to show the glory of God (cf. Psalm 19:1 and Isaiah 6:3). Dawkins' obvious mistake is that he refuses to accept that the Creator of the world might have a more involved agenda than Dawkins is willing to allow or can even conceptualize. Why would Dawkins waste at least three pages of his book on “explicit evidence” supposedly proving evolution, only to admit that everything he just said about trees is not evidence of evolution “if” the Designer had humans in mind? Simply because this is the only kind of “evidence” that can be marshaled for evolution—the kind that can rationally be refuted when a correct interpretation of the facts is made available.

REFERENCE

Dawkins, Richard (2009), *The Greatest Show on Earth* (New York: Free Press).



Q Why did Mary and Joseph not call Jesus “Immanuel”?

A Approximately 700 years before the birth of the promised Messiah, Isaiah prophesied about a virgin who would “conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (7:14). Years later, the apostle Matthew referred to Isaiah’s prophecy, specifying once again that, “they shall call His name Immanuel” (1:22-23). Many have wondered why, if the promised Son of Mary was supposed to be called “Immanuel,” this name is never used in the New Testament aside from Matthew’s quotation of Isaiah 7:14. Why do we never read of Mary, Joseph, John the Baptist, Peter, Paul, or others calling the Messiah “Immanuel”?

Thankfully, as so often is the case with God’s Word, the Bible is its own (and best!) commentary. To better understand what Isaiah meant by the **name** Immanuel, it is helpful to consider what the prophet wrote two chapters later. In prophesying about the Messiah, Isaiah wrote: “His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (9:6). Did Isaiah mean by this that the Messiah would literally have as His given name “Wonderful,” “Counselor,” or “Everlasting Father”? Surely, to ask is to answer. These names were given to describe the **nature** of the Messiah, not serve as literal, given names. As commentator Albert Barnes noted:

His [the Messiah’s—EL] attributes shall be such as to make all these applications appropriate descriptions of his power and work. To be called, and to be, in the Hebrew, often mean the same thing.... Such a use of a verb is not uncommon in Isaiah. ‘One calls him,’ is, according to the usage in Isaiah, as ranch as to say [the equivalent of saying—EL], he will justly bear this name; or simply, he will be (1997).

By **nature**, the son of Mary was “Immanuel” (John 1:1-3; 10:30,33; 20:28), but by **name**, He was “Jesus.”

A similar distinction between one’s nature and name is found as early as Genesis chapter two. Following God’s creation of Eve from Adam’s rib, the first man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; **she shall be called woman**, because she was taken out of man” (Genesis 2:23, emp. added). Although

Adam said, “she shall be called woman,” one chapter later Moses recorded how “Adam called his wife’s name Eve” (3:20). Obviously, Adam meant that **by nature** the one whom God created from his rib was a **female human**, “a helper comparable to him” (though with noticeable differences and roles—3:18-23), but by **name**, she would be known as “Eve.”

Gabriel’s conversation with Mary prior to her miraculous conception is also helpful in gaining a proper understanding of Jesus’ name and nature. Although Gabriel did not use the term “Immanuel,” notice how he distinguished between Jesus’ given name and the titles by which He would be known as a result of His divine nature:

Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and **shall call His name Jesus**. He will be great, and **will be called the Son of the Highest**; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.... The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born **will be called the Son of God** (Luke 1:30-35, emp. added).

Finally, Matthew further clarifies God’s use of the “name” Immanuel in the very passage he quotes—Isaiah 7:14. Immediately before and after Matthew reminds his readers of the prophecy regarding the Messiah’s name being “Immanuel” (1:23), he noted how Joseph **would** call (1:21) and **did** call (1:25) the Messiah by “His name Jesus.” The fact that Matthew wrote of the Messiah’s “name” being “Immanuel” in verse 23, but “Jesus” in verses 21 and 25, clearly shows that Matthew understood that one name (Jesus) was a given, literal name, while the other (Immanuel), similar to Jesus’ title “Christ,” characterized His essence.

Eric Lyons

REFERENCE

Barnes, Albert (1997), *Notes on the Old and New Testaments* (Electronic Database: Biblsoft).



in the cause of freedom, virtue, and posterity.

The Congress, therefore...do earnestly recommend, that Friday, the Seventeenth day of May next, be observed by the said colonies as a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer; that we may, with united hearts, **confess and bewail our manifold sins and transgressions**, and, by a sincere repentance and amendment of life, appease his righteous displeasure, and, **through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, obtain his pardon and forgiveness** (*Journals of the...*, 4:208-209, emp. added).

The Congress felt it their duty to urge Americans to “confess and bewail our manifold sins and transgressions.” What in the world does that have to do with attending to the pressing matters of founding a new nation and prosecuting a war? They felt it was a critical factor in the success of their endeavor. Indeed, if you do not have God’s approval and assistance, you are on your own—dependent on your own precarious capabilities.

Just a year and a half into the War with Great Britain, Congress issued another proclamation on November 1, 1777, that included the following excerpt:

It is therefore recommended to the legislative or executive Powers of these UNITED STATES to set apart

THURSDAY, the eighteenth Day of December next, for SOLEMN THANKSGIVING and PRAISE: That at one Time and with one Voice, the good People may express the grateful Feelings of their Hearts, and consecrate themselves to the Service of their Divine Benefactor; and that, together with their sincere Acknowledgments and Offerings, they may **join the penitent Confession of their manifold Sins, whereby they had forfeited every Favor**; and their humble and earnest Supplication **that it may please GOD through the Merits of JESUS CHRIST, mercifully to forgive and blot them out of Remembrance** (*Journals of...*, 9:854-851, emp. added).

How did the Founders believe the favor of God would be forfeited? By sin. How might the sins of Americans be neutralized in order to preserve the favor of God? They said Americans must humble themselves, repent and confess their sins to God, and beg His forgiveness based on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

A year later, on November 17, 1778, the Continental Congress reiterated the same principle:

Resolved, That it be, and hereby is recommended to the legislative or executive authority of each of the said states, to appoint Wednesday, the 30th day of December next, to be observed as a day of public thanksgiving and praise, that all the people may, with united hearts, on that day, express a

just sense of his unmerited favors.... And it is further recommended, that, together with devout thanksgiving, may be joined a **penitent confession of our sins, and humble supplication for pardon, through the merits of our Savior**; so that, under the smiles of Heaven, our public councils may be directed, our arms by land and sea prospered, our liberty and independence secured, our schools and seminaries of learning flourish, our trade be revived, our husbandry and manufactures increased, and the hearts of all impressed with undissembled piety, with benevolence and zeal for the public good (*Journals of...*, 12:1138-1139, emp. added).

Observe that the favor and support of God (“the smiles of Heaven”) are what ensure national success. And what ensures national success is “devout thanksgiving” to God, “confession of our sins,” and “humble supplication for pardon” through Christ. Are America’s citizens, together with our politicians, judges, and educators, willing to perform such acts of contrition? If not, only one possible outcome awaits us.

A year and a half later, on March 20, 1779, the Congress issued another nationwide proclamation:

WHEREAS, in just Punishment of our **manifold Transgressions**, it hath pleased the Supreme Disposer of all Events to visit these United States with a calamitous War, through which his Divine Providence hath hitherto in a wonderful Manner conducted us.... AND WHEREAS, there is but too much Reason to fear that notwithstanding the Chastisements received and Benefits bestowed, too few have been sufficiently awakened to a **Sense of their Guilt**, or warmed with Gratitude, or taught to **amend their Lives and turn from their Sins**, that so he might turn from his Wrath: AND WHEREAS, from a Consciousness of what we have merited at his Hands, and an Apprehension that the Malevolence of our disappointed Enemies, like the Incredulity of Pharaoh, may be used

SPEAKING SCHEDULES

Kyle Butt

September 8
September 19-23

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(606) 789-6219

Eric Lyons

September 12
September 24-26

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(334) 567-6561
(715) 449-7758

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September 1, 8, 15, 22
September 12
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as the Scourge of Omnipotence to vindicate his slighted Majesty, there is Reason to fear that he may permit much of our Land to become the Prey of the Spoiler, our Borders to be ravaged, and our Habitations destroyed: RESOLVED, THAT it be recommended to the several States to appoint the First Thursday in May next to be a Day of Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer to Almighty God, that he will be pleased to avert those impending Calamities **which we have but too well deserved:** That he will grant us his Grace to **repent of our Sins, and amend our Lives, according to his Holy Word** (*Journals of...*, 13:343-344, emp. added).

Were you taught in school that the Founders believed that one of the reasons Americans had to endure a war with Great Britain was because of the sins of Americans? The Founders stated explicitly that the antidote to offending God due to sin was for Americans to repent of their sins and amend their lives, i.e., stop living out of harmony with God's Word. According to the Founders, failure to do so will result in "impending calamities which we have but too well deserved."

Six months later, on October 20, 1779, another congressional proclamation likewise sought forgiveness for sin:

Resolved, That it be recommended to the several states, to appoint Thursday, the 9th of December next, to be a day of public and solemn thanksgiving to Almighty God for his mercies, and of prayer for the continuance of his favor and protection to these United States...that he would in mercy look down upon us, **pardon our sins** and receive us into his favor (*Journals of...*, 15:1191-1193, emp. added).

Two years later, on March 19, 1782, a similar proclamation went forth across the nation:

The United States in Congress assembled, therefore, taking into consideration our present situation, **our multiplied transgressions of the holy laws of our God**, and his past acts of kindness and goodness

towards us, which we ought to record with the liveliest gratitude, think it their indispensable duty to call upon the several states, to set apart the last Thursday in April next, as a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer, that our joint supplications may then ascend to the throne of the Ruler of the Universe, beseeching Him to diffuse a spirit of **universal reformation among all ranks and degrees of our citizens** (*Journals of...*, 22:137-138, emp. added).

The Founders of these United States claimed that the establishment of the Republic was achieved by the blessing of God. They also insisted that maintaining His favor was absolutely necessary in order for the Republic to be perpetuated. They further believed that retaining God's favor depended on Americans conforming themselves to the teachings of the Bible and receiving forgiveness for their violations of it. If they were correct (and they most certainly were), then the nation is in the midst of deadly national peril. Generally speaking, neither our political leaders nor the rank and file of Americans are striving to retain God's favor by living according to His will and seeking forgiveness for their sins. We would do well to listen soberly to the words of God to another nation long ago:

For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the Lord our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments...? Therefore you shall be careful to do as the Lord your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and **that you may prolong your days in the land** which you shall possess (Deuteronomy 4:7-8; 5:32-33, emp. added).

Take as one example among many the sin of gambling which has become so prominent in recent years via casinos, lotteries, and race tracks. American civilization has declined to such an extent that most citizens today would be surprised to learn that, from the very beginning of our nation until about 50 years ago, the majority of Americans viewed gambling as immoral. In fact, the Founding Fathers forthrightly addressed the issue of gambling. The Continental Congress passed a resolution on October 12, 1778, declaring their condemnation of gambling:

Whereas **true religion and good morals are the only solid foundations of public liberty and happiness:** Resolved, That it be, and it is hereby earnestly recommended to the several states, to take the most effectual measures for the encouragement thereof, and for the suppressing theatrical entertainments, horse racing, gaming, and such other diversions as are productive of idleness, dissipation, and a general depravity of principles and manners (*Journals of...*, 12:1001, emp. added).

The laws of Connecticut included a prohibition against gambling:

Gaming is an amusement, the propensity of which is deeply implanted in human nature. Mankind in the most unpolished state of barbarism and in the most refined periods of luxury and dissipation, are attached to this practice with an unaccountable ardor and fondness. To describe the pernicious consequences of it, the ruin and desolation of private families, and the promotion of idleness and dissipation, belong to a treatise on ethics (as quoted in Swift, 1796, 2:351).

In a letter to Martha Jefferson in 1787, Thomas Jefferson commented on the degrading influence of gambling:

In a world which furnishes so many employments which are useful, so many which are amusing, it is our own fault if we ever know what ennui [boredom—DM] is, or if we are ever driven to the miserable resources of

gaming, which corrupts our dispositions, and teaches us a habit of hostility against all mankind (as quoted in Forman, 1900, p. 266).

In his proposal for a revision of the laws in his home state of Virginia, Jefferson offered the following “Bill to Prevent Gaming,” which restricted the holding of public office to non-gamblers:

Any person who shall bet or play for money, or other goods, or who shall bet on the hands or sides of those who play at any game in a tavern, racefield, or other place of public resort, shall be deemed an infamous gambler, and shall not be eligible to any office of trust or honor within this state (1950, 2:306).

Ironically, as Commander-in-Chief of all U.S. military forces, George Washington frequently addressed the deleterious effect of gambling on the soldiers of the Continental Army he commanded. In General Orders issued on February 26, 1776, Washington admonished:

All officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers are positively forbid [sic] playing at cards, and other games of chance. At this time of public distress, **men may find enough to do in the service of their God, and their Country**, without abandoning themselves to **vice and immorality** (1931, 4:347, emp. added).

The majority view of America and its Founders from day one has been that gambling in its various forms is a vice that is destructive of the moral fabric of society—a view they gleaned from the Bible (see Miller and Butt, 2003). Yet, casinos and bingo parlors are springing up all over the country as the wicked forces of organized gambling are waging a relentless war to spread their evil influence throughout America.

With uncanny anticipation, George Washington declared to his troops on May 8, 1777: “As few vices are attended with more pernicious consequences,

in civil life; so there are **none more fatal in a military one**, than that of Gaming; which **often brings disgrace and ruin upon officers**, and injury and punishment upon the Soldiery” (8:28, emp. added). Tragically, if the Continental Congress was correct in its claim that “true religion and good morals are the only solid foundations of public liberty and happiness,” then America is moving swiftly down a road that will result in “a general depravity of principles and manners” and the dissolution of “public liberty and happiness.”

CONCLUSION

The Founders were extremely astute men who understood the nuts and bolts of establishing a successful government. Despite their differences, they nevertheless agreed that the government should refrain from hindering a free society’s pursuit of Christian principles. To them, governmental interference in or discouragement of Christianity was unthinkable. Quite the contrary, they saw Christianity as the key to national progress and survival.

Sadly, even tragically, American civilization is suffering from a variety of moral and religious maladies that threaten the very existence of the Republic. In a letter written to Secretary of War James McHenry on November 4, 1800, *Declaration* signer Charles Carroll foretold the outcome of an America removed from Christian morality:

[W]ithout morals a republic cannot subsist any length of time; they therefore who are decrying the Christian religion, whose morality is so sublime & pure, who denounces against the wicked eternal misery, & insures to the good eternal happiness, are undermining the solid foundation of morals, **the best security for the duration of free governments** (as quoted in Steiner, 1907, p. 475, emp. added).

The solutions are readily available for all who care to seek them. We must return to the God of the Bible, the religion of Christ, and the moral principles derived therefrom. God help us to achieve a great spiritual awakening in hopes of avoiding the inevitable demise of a nation that turns its back on Him (cf. Deuteronomy 28). “Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Consider your ways!’” (Haggai 1:5,7). Indeed,

Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.... The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect. The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations. **Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD** (Psalm 33:8-12, emp. added).

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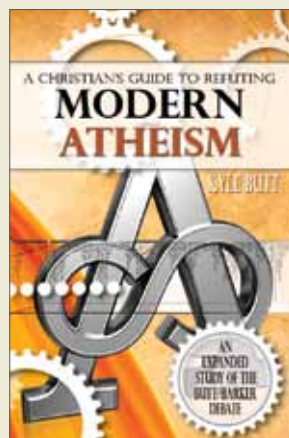
NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

APOLOGETICS
PRESS, INC.

BUTT/BARKER DEBATE NOW A BOOK

A notable debate on the existence of God was conducted on February 12, 2009 between popular atheist Dan Barker and A.P.'s own Kyle Butt. In addition to the capacity crowd of 500 and the thousands that watched over the Internet, the debate has been viewed by many more by means of the DVD released by Apologetics Press last year. Having engaged in over 70 public debates, Dan Barker is widely considered among atheists to be well-qualified to articulate the atheist's viewpoint.

Due to the brief nature of the debate, a total time of about two hours, several issues were broached that called for a more thorough treatment. While many of Barker's atheistic contentions were answered in the main, we thought it would be beneficial to provide more comprehensive responses to his assertions. In that regard, we are pleased to announce the release of the book version of the debate, titled *A Christian's Guide to Refuting Modern Atheism*, subtitled "An Expanded Study of the Butt/Barker Debate."



This volume contains a complete transcript of the oral debate. However, it also contains an additional 200+ pages of detailed analysis and refutation of Barker's atheistic allegations. Consequently, in addition to providing the reader with a response to Barker's debate points, this outstanding book serves as a valuable guide to refute most modern atheistic attacks on the God of the Bible. Indeed, it offers a decisive defeat of atheism.

At a time when a tidal wave of skepticism, unbelief, and rejection of the Christian worldview is sweeping over the nation, this volume constitutes a welcome addition to the Christian arsenal in the never-ending war between good and evil. You will want this book in your library, and you will want to use it to bolster the Christian convictions of your children, grandchildren, and friends.

Dave Miller

See the Center Spread
for More Details